

For Meeting: s.38 GAC Update (Mon Feb.14)

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Date: Mon, 14 Feb 2022 19:36:05 +0000
Attachments: 2022-02-14: U.S. media roll-up: "Freedom Convoy" Protest (as of 11:30amET) (714.75 kB)

DMA: s.38

Deputy,

Please see below for your material for s.38 at 15:00.

Stuart

From: Beaulieu, Sebastien -NGA <Sebastien.Beaulieu@international.gc.ca>
Subject: s.38 GAC Update (Mon Feb.14)

As requested. For DMA @ s.38 at 1500.

Approved: NGM/M.Grant.

Top Level Messaging:

- GAC continues to monitor the situation in the US and around the world. Concerned that the Canadian 'model' is being exported and that the Canadian flag is being (mis-)used as a symbol to fuel protests in capitals around the world (eg. France, Belgium, Netherland, NZ).
 - Once the more immediate cross-border blockades are dismantled, we will require a robust strategy to counter 'Buy America' pressures and tendencies to re-shore supply chains south of the border.
1. **Weekend Canada-US Engagement:** Senior-level Canada-US engagement continued over the weekend with e.g.:
 - PS Minister Marco Mendicino -- Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas (Sunday)
 - TC Minister Omar Alghabra -- Transport Secretary Pete Buttigieg (Sunday)
 - NSIA Jody Thomas -- White House Homeland Security Advisor Liz Sherwood-Randall (Friday/Saturday) -- White House Statement pasted below.
 2. **Upcoming CAN-US engagement in the works:**
 - Minister Joly is expected to speak with Secretary Antony Blinken on Tuesday (timing TBC), and Deputy Minister Morgan with her counterpart Wendy Sherman on Tuesday, both Ukraine-focused calls though borders expected to be mentioned.
 - Minister Alghabra is expected to engage with Amb. Cohen on Tuesday.
 3. **Detroit-Windsor Ambassador Bridge:** Traffic resumed just past midnight Monday morning -- after 6 days of blockade -- with a first truck crossing into the

US. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) marked it with a tweet. There are other list of hotspots along the Canada-US border (incl. Surrey, BC; Emerson, MB & Coutts, AB).



4. **Trade and supply chains disruptions:** In addition to recent statements from groups such as the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME), U.S. groups are also part of the chorus with powerful groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers and Business Roundtable, and of the American Auto Industry, underscoring the trade impact and supply chains disruptions (pasted below).
5. **GiveSendGo reportedly hacked:** Further to GoFundMe's decision and the recourse to alternative crowd-sourcing platforms, media reports indicate that US-based online funding site GiveSendGo was hacked and donor info was exposed. According to civil society organisation and external experts, indications are that a significant proportion of funders originate from outside of Canada and principally from the US.
6. **US Terrorism Advisory: "Mis/dis/mal-information":** No major security incident occurred around the Sunday Superbowl, ahead of which the US DHS had issued a National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin (Feb.7) citing specifically the threat fuelled by "false or misleading narratives and conspiracy theories and other forms of 'mis/dis/mal-information.'"

From our network of missions s.38, MANIL, WLGTN):

7. **WELLINGTON (Feb 14):** "An Imported Protest" with a Canadian flag raised by protesters on one of Parliament's flagpoles -- Despite record levels of rain and strong winds in Wellington over the weekend, the protestors persist with media reporting 400-500 camping overnight, and up to 3000 participating during the day. The protestors are increasingly entrenched with well-stocked kitchens, a medical centre, and even a daycare. PM Police continue to be focused on unblocking the

roads around Parliament, but have been unsuccessful to date in conversations with organisers. PM Ardern has described the week-long protest as “not any form of protest I’ve seen before”. On at least two morning news programs, she said it felt “imported”, complete with “Trump flags and Canadian flags”. Ardern told protestors to “go home and take your children”, describing the protest as “not an appropriate place for children to be”. There are also calls on Twitter from the public asking the media to investigate where the funding for the protest is coming from, suggesting that the protest could be funded and controlled from abroad.



8. **MANILA (Feb 14):** Canadian truck blockades regularly appear as news items in several Philippines English language newspapers and on CNN Philippines. News items are usually Reuters, AFP and Russian media sourced. Whenever we meet HOMs or DHOMs we are routinely asked about crisis, Canadian rule of law and concern about copycat demonstrations in their own countries encouraged by Canadian example. At least one commented their mission in downtown Ottawa was affected.

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10. **U.S. media: Trump says the US “far more of a tinderbox than Canada”** --
With the re-opening of the Ambassador Bridge, there is a noticeable shift in US reporting about what’s next for this growing number of frustrated Americans who are pandemic-fatigued and “want mandates gone”. There are more and more articles about how social media is helping to organize the thousands of followers of groups like, “Convoy to save America” and “The People’s Convoy”. The Detroit Free Press quotes several local university professors who make relevant points, “Social media reduces the costs of both finding those like-minded (people) as well as coordinating with them to engage in action”; “The imagery of big trucks together is powerful...that sense of curiosity leads to clicks”; “In some ways, social media is a furnace for both good and bad ideas. The technology moves across borders and its less controllable by governments”. Regional media are telling more stories about how local Americans are “stocking their SUVs” with food and supplies in anticipation of joining a convoy to major cities across America. There are also articles about local U.S. communities -- both close and far from the U.S. border with Canada, where they are passing the basket, taking up donations and even collecting loose change for all truckers – some would argue a work around for the shutdown of GoFundMe. Beyond the mention of DHS and law enforcement’s watch of the situation and exchanges between Canadian and US national security advisors, there is very little substantive U.S. media reporting about the security aspects of the situation unfolding in the United States. Over the weekend, during a FOX News interview, Donald Trump added that the United States is “far more of a tinderbox than Canada”. See attached full media roll-up.

See also Politico reporting on Belgium and France (pasted below).

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<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/02/13/statement-by-white-house-homeland-security-advisor-dr-liz-sherwood-randall/>

Statement by White House Homeland Security Advisor Dr. Liz Sherwood-Randall

FEBRUARY 13, 2022 [STATEMENTS AND RELEASES](#)

We are working closely with our Canadian counterparts to end the blockade of key bridges and crossings between the United States and Canada and to restore vital commerce between our two nations. Following the President's video teleconference with Prime Minister Trudeau on Friday, I spoke with Canadian National Security and Intelligence Advisor Jody Thomas again last night to express appreciation for the decisive law enforcement efforts that are underway along the border to advance toward full resolution of the blockades. We discussed the widespread damaging impacts the obstructions have already had on the lives and livelihoods of people in both our nations and the imperative of taking swift, strong action and deterring future blockades.

This morning, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas and Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg also spoke with their Canadian counterparts. The updates they received indicate that most protestors have been cleared from the Ambassador bridge, barriers are being removed, and the corridor is being secured. Canadian authorities are taking proactive steps to ensure no further unlawful disruption of the flow of people and goods occurs. Individuals trespassing on property located on the road to the bridge will be cited for trespassing and their vehicles will be towed. Canadian authorities intend to reopen the Ambassador Bridge today after completing necessary safety checks. We stand ready to support our Canadian partners wherever useful in order to ensure the restoration of the normal free flow of commerce.

Senior White House staff are also remaining in close contact with Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Northern Border Governors and Members of Congress.

Business Leaders Urge Resolution of U.S.-Canada Border Blockade **FEB 10, 2022**

Washington - The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers and Business Roundtable today issued the following statement on the disruptions to trade at U.S.-Canada border crossings:

"The disruptions we are seeing at the U.S.-Canada border — at the Detroit-Windsor Ambassador Bridge and at other crossings — are adding to the significant supply chain strains on manufacturers and other businesses in the United States.

"The business community is rolling up its sleeves to find workarounds and keep facilities up and running, but we are already seeing some production cuts, shift reductions, and temporary plant closures. The North American economy relies on our ability to work closely together, including our manufacturing sectors. We need to apply the same spirit of cooperation to tackle this problem.

"We respectfully urge the Canadian government to act swiftly to address the disruption to the flow of trade and its impact on manufacturers and other businesses on both sides of the border. We

appreciate that the Biden Administration is engaged with the Canadian government, and we strongly encourage officials to continue efforts to resolve these blockages at the border.”

AMERICAN AUTO INDUSTRY STATEMENT ON U.S.-CANADA

BORDER CROSSING DISRUPTIONS February 10, 2022

Washington, D.C.— Governor Matt Blunt, president of the American Automotive Policy Council – joined by Bill Long, president of the Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA) and Julie Fream, president of the Original Equipment Suppliers Association (OESA) – today issued the following joint statement:

“The current border disruptions at the Detroit-Windsor Ambassador Bridge and other crossings are adding additional strain to the automotive supply chain that has already been stressed by semiconductor shortages and other pandemic-related issues.

“U.S. automakers and suppliers are doing everything possible to maximize production with what they have, working to keep lines running and shifts scheduled to minimize the impact on American autoworkers, but the situation has already led to reduced production and may spread the longer the disruptions persist.

“Automakers and suppliers appreciate that the Biden Administration is following the situation at the northern border closely and taking actions to minimize the disruptions at these critical border crossings on which the U.S. auto industry rely. We urge the administration to enhance their efforts and continue working with the Canadian government to minimize the impact on American automakers, suppliers, as well as their workers and consumers.

“We also seek to underscore to the Canadian government the need for swift action to mitigate impacts to auto workers and suppliers on both sides of the border due to the deeply interconnected North American auto supply chain.”

The American Automotive Policy Council (AAPC) represents American Automakers Ford Motor Company, General Motors Company and Stellantis. AAPC is a Washington, D.C. association representing the common public policy interests of its member companies.

The Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA) and its four specialized divisions – including the Original Equipment Suppliers Association (OESA) – comprise a leading international trade association representing vehicle suppliers that manufacture and remanufacture components, technologies, and systems for use in passenger cars and heavy trucks.

Other media articles

Belgium (Feb 13, POLITICO): A few dozen vans, campers, buses and cars at a parking lot on the outskirts of Brussels marked the quiet entrance Monday morning of the so-called European freedom convoy into Brussels, the EU’s home — the latest stop of the protest movement against COVID-19 restrictions that started in Canada before going global. As of mid-morning, Brussels police said roughly 60 vehicles had gathered in the one parking lot where they are allowing protesters to assemble — “Parking C,” next to a massive convention center barely within city limits. French media reports indicated hundreds more trucks and mobile homes could be on the way, though, and police officers are filtering traffic on the main access routes to avoid the convoy from

entering and blocking Brussels. Some factions also claimed Monday morning they were heading to Strasbourg, the joint home of the European Parliament, to meet with sympathetic lawmakers.

<https://go.politicoemail.com/?qs=e770ffff97121a2ec9f74c6449f7da0c58aed5bea78b898027a1ace4b05f8f36c73ca72a03b3e7ead8ba7fddb0a968185af48b14415bffa7>

France: (Feb 12,POLITICO) French Police intercepted hundreds of vehicles and issued almost 300 fines as self declared "freedom convoy attempted to enter Paris to protest COVID restriction on Saturday.

<https://go.politicoemail.com/?qs=aa3c03ba451fa6aa39f1d0de7359629932cfb5bc58c1748a738440bc966448f8f3cccbc4366d8f677572e92df8a90d8220c77222e7da134e>